

REMARKS

Pursuant to the present amendment, independent claims 1, 14, and 27 have been amended. Claims 8-11 and 21-24 have been amended to provide consistency with their respective independent claims. Claims 28-29 have been added. No new matter has been introduced by way of the present amendment. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the amendments and arguments set forth herein.

In the Office Action, claims 6 and 19 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Pursuant to the present amendment, new independent claims 28 and 29 have been added to present dependent claims 6 and 19, respectively, in independent form. Thus, it is believed that new claims 29 and 29 are allowable.

In the Office Action, claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-18, 20-21, and 23-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Satya (U.S. Patent No. 6,751,519). Claims 9 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being obvious over Satya in view of Atkinson (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0029029). Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections.

Independent claims 1, 14, and 27, as amended, include the general features of receiving fault classification data associated with a tool fault condition. The tool fault condition is associated with a process tool for processing a wafer. At least one yield parameter of the wafer is estimated based on the fault classification data.

Satya fails to teach or suggest these features. Satya teaches measuring yield characteristics of test structures formed on the wafer to estimate yield for the wafer. See col. 4, lines 59-63, for example. Hence, any fault detection contemplated by Satya relates to wafer fault

detection, not tool fault detection. Nowhere does Satya mention classifying tool fault conditions associated with a process tool for processing a wafer and estimating yield parameters based on the classification data associated with the tool fault. Atkinson fails to correct this deficiency.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 14, 27, and all claims depending therefrom are allowable. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

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